



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
PAT QUINN

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Contact

Press Line: (312) 814-3158

Brooke Anderson Brooke.Anderson@illinois.gov

Dave Blanchette Dave.Blanchette@illinois.gov

Governor Quinn Signs Law to Ensure All Illinois Students Get an Early Start on Learning

New Law Lowers Compulsory School Age from Seven to Six Years Old

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today signed a new law that lowers the compulsory school age for students in Illinois in order to ensure all children have the opportunity to build a solid foundation for academic achievement. The law will also help to combat truancy. Research shows that children who start school at an earlier age are less likely to drop out of school, be placed in special education or commit crimes, and more likely to attend college. Today's action is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to prepare every child for success in college, career and beyond.

"Today is a good day for our students and for the future of Illinois," Governor Quinn said. "The key to so many things in life is a quality education and this new law will ensure our students get an early start on their academic success."

Sponsored by State Senator Kimberly Lightford (D-Westchester) and State Representative LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago), Senate Bill 1307 lowers the compulsory school attendance age from seven to six years of age beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Illinois joins 26 states that have set the compulsory attendance age at six years old. Eight states and the District of Columbia require students to begin school at age five. The law will also help to combat truancy.

Under the new law, any student turning six years old on or before Sept. 1 must be enrolled to attend school for that school year, starting in 2014. This legislation was introduced in part due to investigative reporting by the Chicago Tribune.

"Study after study has demonstrated that the earlier kids start school, the more likely they are to succeed," Senator Lightford said. "This law will help make sure *all* of our children are on the right path."

"This law will help children to develop the social and academic skills that will give them a better chance at success in the future," Representative Ford said. "It will also help to give children from disadvantaged backgrounds an equal opportunity to excel in the classroom. The early developmental stages are critical in a person's life, and Illinois cannot afford to put early education on the back burner."

The law will go into effect on July 1, 2014.

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